

Lights and Shadows

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Lights

and

Shadows

M. Ellen Pittrell

Vol. 2
April
1967

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A TYPICAL DAY IN MY LIFE AS A FOURTH GRADER

Susan Astin

Honorable Mention

At seven o'clock Becky is already up but I'm not. I like school but not at seven o'clock. Mother yells again. Last night I said I would not eat another bowl of grossy oatmeal so she is trying to tell me we'll have eggs, too, and I don't like them either. I'm supposed to dry up and blow away any day now. Becky is a "nice, chubby, little girl." I don't want to be.

We have to leave in thirty minutes but I can not find my red sweater. Our class colors are red and white and we were supposed to wear them. Mother doesn't know--is it in the bottom drawer? I remember I lost it Friday riding home on the bus with Annette Brown.

It's fifteen till nine but school isn't very far. We ride our bicycles if it's not raining or not too cold. My bike is older and more beat up than Becky's but I like mine better. We live on a big hill and can go real fast down it. My pig-tails hit me across the face if I turn my head.

My school is pretty for a school. We have brand new bike racks that I really like. Becky has to go way around the corner to the second grade. I just have to go across the

breeze-way. Mrs. Hawkins, room 14, is my teacher. The boys call her "hawk-eye". The bell rings nine o'clock when I walk in the

A TYPICAL DAY IN MY LIFE AS A FOURTH GRADER

My seat is near the back by the window. Annette Brown, who is my really best friend, sits in front of me. A dirty word is written on the top of my desk but I didn't write it.

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At seven o'clock Becky is already up but I'm not. I like school but not at seven o'clock. Mother yells again. Last night I said I would not eat another bowl of groady oatmeal so she is frying bacon. I know we'll have eggs, too, and I don't like them either. I'm supposed to dry up and blow away any day now. Becky is a "nice, chubby, little girl." I don't want to be.

We have to leave in thirty minutes but I can not find my red sweater. Our class colors are red and white and we were supposed to wear them. Mother doesn't know--is it in the bottom drawer? I remember I lost it Monday riding home on the bus with Annette Brown.

It's fifteen till nine but school isn't very far. We ride our bicycles if it's not raining or not too cold. My bike is older and more beat up than Becky's but I like mine better. We live on a big hill and can go real fast down it. My pig-tails hit me across the face if I turn my head.

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My seat is near the back by the window. Annette Brown, who is my really best friend, sits in front of me. A dirty word is written on the top of my desk but I didn't write it. Annette told me what it meant.

Mrs. Hawkins always waits until every one is in the room before she comes in. Most teachers are in there doing something--erasing boards, dusting erasers--but not Mrs. Hawkins. She tries to be funny--like she calls the trash can File 37.

Ronnie Cambell comes in late which is usual for him but this time he had a skinny black kitten with him. Everybody went crazy over that. Mrs. Hawkins got a box and named him Junior and told us to sit down and shut up.

I like roll call because my name is first and I can sit back and relax and not wait around for her to get to my name. Arithmetic is what I hate and that comes right after. When I know the answers it's all right but I usually don't know. We are on per cents and interest rates now. At ten o'clock we have English which is my best subject. Mrs. Hawkins asks me to conjugate verbs on the board and I know how. She asks Frances Baker to do only one but Frances can't. Nobody I know is as dumb as Frances Baker; she can't do anything. Everybody in my class, and I guess the whole school, hates her. She picks her nose all the time and she has real orang-y

red hair and lots of freckles. One time we had a red-bird in a cage and everybody took turns keeping him over night. When it was Frances' turn she let him get away and nobody likes her much for that.

After English we see a film. This time it is a safety film telling how to cross the street and look both ways and how not to leave your roller skates on the stairs. Ronnie Cambell told us he broke both of his legs like that. Mrs. Hawkins made like she believed him but nobody really did. Ronnie lies about most everything and can tell some good ones when he's late to school.

Our room goes to lunch at twelve-thirty with Mrs. Sumner's room. In line the boys always push and fight around with each other, not mean, just playfully. We're always supposed to eat everything on our plates but we always swap around to get what we like--I'll eat your carrots if you'll eat my peas.

After lunch the boys go outside to play baseball. Some of the girls go outside, too, but I play jacks on the floor with Annette and Janet. Annette mostly always wins but sometimes I do. Janet isn't very good yet.

At two o'clock we have geography which is okay but not my favorite. I am lucky today because Mrs. Hawkins only asks me what the equator is and I know that.

After school, Annette comes home with me. We walk my bike cause she's too heavy to double. She can play "Heart and

Soul" on the piano and is teaching me how. She is the person I most want to be like, not just because of "Heart and Soul" but because she's not skinny and she has long brown hair and doesn't have to wear it in pigtails. Her father picks her up before we eat supper.

My daddy gets off at five-thirty and that's when we eat supper. We have pork chops, my favorite. Becky had a note from her teacher but Mother wouldn't show it to Daddy so I didn't tell.

I want to watch Rin Tin Tin at 7:30 but I've got Arithmetic homework to do. I'd rather Mother would help me cause Daddy yells, but she said she did not know a thing about per cents either. I have to write a pretend letter for English; that's always easy.

Becky never has any homework which is something I don't understand. She gets to watch Rin Tin Tin.

I'm trying to find my new color book to take to school when it's eight-thirty and I have to go to bed. Mother says I can find it in the morning if I won't fiddle around.

SAND CASTLES

(A selection from: LIFE SIZE ANTHOLOGY)
An Analogy of Life

Clint Gould

First Prize Short Story

The sea had quite a reputation. It was wild. Little Robert liked the sea. His parents worried and were nervous about the sea. It was the wildness ---- the aloofness ---- that attracted Robert. Night and sleep were the only things that would permit Robert to leave the beach. At sunrise he was building in the sand, playing with the shells, watching the waves. His mother would call him for meals but he paid her no attention. She would yell and threaten the wrath of his father's hand. His father would walk down where Robert played, watch him for a few moments with a fond look, extend his hand and the two of them would walk back to the cabin on the beach together. His father enjoyed this game; Robert was indifferent, although it was better than coping with his howling mother. They would stop about one hundred feet from the cabin and race each other to the door. The door where his mother always stood watching, waiting to scold them for being slow. If she only knew what she looked like, he giggled to himself. He stopped at the bottom of the stairs to the porch. There he saw the ritual over and his mother was waiting. The

SHORT STORIES

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summer's end was drawing near and he feared the day that they would leave the cabin and go back to the city. He stood, kicking the sand with his toes from right to left, dreaming, passing the time as slowly as possible. He remembered a movie he had seen in which girls with golden bathing suits ran before a king throwing flowers in his path. He kicked the sand harder pretending that he was such a king. He heard the sea now. It seemed to say, "a king, a king, a king." Robert drew himself up and went towards the cabin door. He whispered, as if in prayer, "goodnight sea," and shut the door behind him.

Robert had a theory of his own about the sea. He never mentioned it. He didn't trust his mother or his brother and his father wouldn't understand. Rick was his older brother. This was a fact that Rick never let Robert forget. Robert looked up at the clock on the white wall of the kitchen ---- eight o'clock. It would be hours before he could be on the beach again.

Robert was never allowed to go in the water unless his father was with him. Robert didn't quite understand that; the sea was his friend. There was a lifeguard, from the public beach on the other side of the cove, who occasionally came to swim alone. Robert recognized him at distance by his tight blue swim trunks and his dark tan. Robert thought that he looked as if he belonged in the Roman days ---- a gladiator, perhaps a servant to the sea. He looked perfect. The lifeguard never spoke to anyone that he knew, but one day he did. He

spoke to Robert. Robert had fallen and skinned his leg and the life guard had picked him up. Robert was surprised that someone had helped him. The only thing the lifeguard said, "My name's Dave, and yours?" He sounded concerned so Robert replied, "Robbie." And that was that. The lifeguard stood up next to Robert and as he did Robert saw white skin along the bottom of the bathing suit. He knew, then, that Dave wasn't perfect and he slowly turned and walked away.

Even so, he wasn't permitted in the water. Robert loved ocean water, not that of pools that his mother always wanted to be near. He hated that burning feeling in his eyes, besides, the sea had sand. At least there was the sand. Not only could you embrace the sand, lay in it, pat it, pull and roll in it, jump and plop down on it, flip and turn somersaults on it, let it slip through your fingers and toes, throw it at brothers, pick it from ears and belly buttons, but when the tide had gone out and the water's border was studded with interesting remainders, you could gouge holes and pits, caves and dungeons in the sand; you could build temples, canals, rivers, moats, castles ---- your own kingdom in the sand.

Robert could build gigantic creations. Once and awhile a little girl would stand on top of a bleached dune and watch him work the sand. She never came any closer than the top of the dune. Robert wasn't going to speak to her unless she came down by him, otherwise, he wasn't going to be bothered, although he was curious.

Robert made his castles in a sequence of episodes, like those in history, each with its battles and rivals, each with its construction and fall. He used an unusual imaginative power in his creations and it overwhelmed him. He moved his fingers skillfully molding the designs as if they were of wax. He would let the sand slip from his fingers, creating minarets, cathedrals, mounding the sand into Pueblo huts, Eifel Towers, massing great piles of sand into Babylonian palaces, Egyptian pyramids, transforming the Grand Canyon into electric plants, canals of Amsterdam; he spent days reconstructing Athens, Rome, Carcassone. He went to bed.

And yet, no matter how he labored, how strong he fortified his portals, how thick he built the walls, at sometime during the night, the sea came in and stole his castles from him. At first Robert thought that his mother and Rick were the culprits, then he thought of his father and the little girl. He imagined her sneaking down onto the deserted beach and trampling his castles. Then he was dreaming. It all came clear to him then.

The battle of the sea and the land. The greatest war was always waging ---- with the jealousy, the hate, the hunger. Ever since the land arose from out of the sea, it has been angered and revengeful. The land grabbed up almost half the world's area. He thought of the sea as man and the land as woman. The sea was wild, savage, restless, strong and demanding while the land was quiet, pretty, still and patient.

The sea, like a wild animal ripping into anything in its path, was the avenger. The land, sturdy yet frightened, rarely relinquished to the pounding surf. The only trouble with the ocean was that it got a little too greedy; it gobbled up anything in its way. Robert saw the lifeguard on one side of the king, the sea, and he was on the other. Together they rode upon the flighting foam towards the beach. He saw Dave smile and the sand just lay ahead waiting. Then he saw his sand castles, bright against the glistening sand, his Babylon. He cried, "Wait!" It was too late.

He awoke with a start and realized he must have been dreaming. He quickly got out of bed and raced to the window. He stared at the sea and the beach and the moonlight reflecting over the sands ---- a large, white, smooth breast pulsating under the moon. He saw no Babylon. The sea was the only motion; it just rolled in and out and in again.

WHEN YOU GOTTA GO. . .

Tom Pitts

Second Prize Short Story

The darkness was pinned to the sky by the stars. It hung like a drapery in the shadows. The street corner was patrolled rhythmically by busses that seemed to be giant animals marking off their territory with musk. The traffic light held on with one hand and blinked its twelve eyes.

All this went unnoticed by Beecher Norris who lived in the brown building on the corner. He yawned a swelling yawn that brought tears to his eyes. He leaned back on the couch and stared at the light bulb that drooped from the gray ceiling. His big, sloppy dog, Opus, lumbered over to the couch and tried to crawl up with Beecher.

"Hey, Piggy, I've got the couch," growled Beecher in mock seriousness. Still Opus could not be denied his way. The big dog stuck his prickly nose against Beecher's bare arm. "Alright, you grizzly bear, I'll take you out as soon as I find my shoes." He got up and started looking for the shoes he had taken off and forgotten when he came in from work. "I wish that just once, you would let me get settled down and comfortable without once asking me if we can't go out and dance with some unfortunate telephone pole." Beecher was

good at griping. He did it every time Opus wanted to go outside.

Meanwhile, above the deserted street, a small steel colored craft hovered in the sooty darkness. Then it zipped in a silent square and settled like a bird on the roof top of the building.

Beecher sifted through a pile of antique newspapers while Opus stood eagerly by. "Oh-key, you ox, I gotta find my dancing shoes. Just grin and bear it until then." He got down on his knees and dragged his shoes out from under the couch. "Opus! I got my shoes." The dog wagged his careful appreciation. "Where's your leash? You can't go naked in the world." He always talked to Opus. "I think I left it in the kitchen." He went into the kitchen and switched on the light.

Zham! Some force hit Beecher and froze him stiff where he stood. His first thought was that he had touched a live electric wire. But he didn't fall or even, for that matter, feel any pain. He was just paralyzed. He stood like an iron statue. Something moved into the field of vision of Beecher's unmovable eyes.

It was some sort of creature or machine. It was not large or frightening; instead it was small and plain. It had no arms or legs. It was only a short torpedo shaped body. Even this was enough to terrify Beecher since he could not make his muscles move to fight or run away.

A voice that sounded as if it came from a cob-webby old radio rasped, "You will not be going out tonight." Beecher tried to shout, but he could not even breathe. An alien had invaded the kitchen, and it was the sharp unchangeable reality.

"I will loosen a few muscles, but do not try to scream, or I will kill you," hissed the voice again.

"Who are you?" blurted Beecher as his jaws and chest began to relax.

"I am a weather balloon or maybe a meteor," responded the mechanical voice. "I don't know what you foolish earthlings called me this time."

"What are you doing here?" asked Beecher as he tried the upper part of his body to see how much he could move.

"I am what you might call a scout. I am a scientist. This is my planet," whispered the creature.

"Yours?" echoed Beecher who except for the turning of his head was still caught in the same pose he had been in when he had been hit by the paralyzing force.

"Why are you here?" Beecher asked.

"I told you. I am on a scientific exploration. We, on my planet, want to mine this land.

"How long will I be like this? Am I paralyzed for life?"

"That would depend on how long you live," rasped the answer from the being.

"How long will that be?" Beecher queried.

"Until I am through with you. I have come in contact

with you to test the effectiveness of my power over the people of this planet.

"Do you come as a friend? This could be the most important day in the history of man." Beecher questioned while trying to calm himself.

"I come to make slaves out of every one on this planet. I can too. I can make you do anything I say. I was not sure of that before, but it is affirmative now. I can control you and kill you," announced the voice.

"No, you can't do tha. . . "

"I suggest that you use your time for speech wisely. Senseless arguments will get you nowhere," commanded the voice.

"Why. . . why can't I move?" Beecher stammered.

"Because you are my toy. Let me show you what I can do to you. Turn around."

Beecher's body twisted in the doorway. After a few clumsy taken steps, he marched into the living room like a toy soldier.

"Ah, your people are going to make excellent slaves," commented the creature.

"What do you mean?" asked Beecher as he sat on the couch.

"Look at the creatures of this planet; see what fine workers they will make. You are virtual giants when compared to my race. Look at your strong arms. Your well developed legs. You are a race of workers. Now, look at me. I have no need for limbs. I was made to control more suitable workers.

"But, you surely don't think that you can conquer a whole

world. You are small enough for me to destroy with my bare hands," Beecher said.

"You are right. We have only a thin shell. But only one thing here can pierce it, and you earthlings will never get the chance. Why don't you throw me out of your house?" the creature laughed. Beecher knew as he sat on the couch that he might never get up; that he might never move again. He knew because while he was calmly walking to the couch to take his seat, he had been trying to break and run away. But his body was in the masterful grip of the alien.

"We will find some way to destroy you," he stated with hollow confidence.

"No, you will never have the chance. A slave in my mine will have time for two things: to work and to die. But you won't be around."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"Why, kill you, of course," rasped the reply.

"For what reason?" asked Beecher staring at the squat fire-hydrant shaped creature.

"For the sake of science. I will need to know what it takes to kill a being from this world."

"You'll never make this night-mare come true." He was growing desperate. He sat helpless as a mannequin as the creature began to move around the room.

"Be silent, while I am computing," it commanded.

Beecher took this opportunity to gaze around the room

to find a weapon to use against the strange creature. His eye fell upon Opus, who had fallen asleep by the door. "Fine watch dog you are!" he thought out loud.

"Silence!" the being ordered in a frightening tone. "I am working on my report to my superiors."

"What will your report say?" asked Beecher trying to play on the creature's vanity.

"It simply says that this planet, although dangerous, contains valuable resources. We will destroy all land animals that will not work in our mines.

"Why just land animals? Why not kill the whole planet? Why not blow us out of the universe!" Beecher asked cynically.

"Why will we restrict our operations to the land? That is a secret that no earthling will ever know and live."

"I am to die. Tell me."

"I am not to tell anyone. I am to submit my report for my project to my superiors. I want no mistakes made."

"Are you poisoned by water?"

"No, that compound is rare on my planet, but it is not harmful to us."

"There are millions of people here. You have no right to enslave them. Do you come from a planet where there is no feeling?" asked Beecher.

"We have a feeling of love for our own kind. Every other creature is an enemy."

Beecher started talking to himself. "To think that we

have struggled to get this far and become slaves for a race of inhuman"

"You use the word 'Inhuman' as if it were bad. This creature by the door is inhuman," the being interrupted.

"He doesn't do inhuman things. He is a friend. I treat him like a human. He respects his master and is glad to be in his company.

"Then you will understand when you become a slave," said the creature as Beecher watched Opus sit up and scratch his left ear.

"I'd rather die," said Beecher matter of factly.

"Then you shall. I had thoughts about letting you live, but since you have that attitude, I'm going to have to kill you," responded the squat creature.

"If I am to die as you say I am, tell me the weapon that we might use against you so I will die knowing that my world has a chance to repel the invaders that have seized their bodies."

"You cannot break the paralysis that I have you trapped in. So, I will tell you. The people from my planet are endangered by only one thing here. One substance on this planet is deadly to us. That substance is what you call salt."

"Salt?"

"Yes, I have found that there is enough salt water on this planet to destroy my whole race. Salt dissolves our outer shell and our contents spill out."

"But, why do you take the risk?"

"Because I will not be stopped. This is my idea! This is my plan. I conceived it. I convinced my leaders that this planet was worth the risk of mining it. I volunteered to come here to study. I have evaluated your planet and found it rich. I have made contact with an earth man and found him vulnerable to my every command. I was allowed to venture to this planet with a special understanding with my leaders. If I didn't report back, I would be presumed dead, and the whole operation would be canceled. Everything has gone exactly as I planned. All that is left for me to do is radio my report back to my home planet, and they will begin their quiet invasion. I will get the recognition that I deserve. I will be a hero on my planet. Nothing can stop me!"

"Please, you can't. . . ."

"I can! Now, we part company, earthling!"

A light flashed on the small creature's body. Beecher was suddenly caught in a twisting, jerking fit. His body snapped and he fell to the floor. His twisted, contorted face mirrored the condition of his body. The last thing he saw was the alien creature, the floor, and Opus. He lay on his back on the floor and stared up at the light for an excruciating moment. Then darkness.

Then, to his amazement, the light came back. He lay on the floor for a moment to try to tell himself the night-mare was over. Something touched his shoulder.

"Opus!" Beecher cried sitting up, "what happened?" Then he got his answer. In the center of the room where the creature had been, there was a shrunken pile of dissolved metallic substance. . . surrounded by a pool of yellow liquid.

Beecher breathed a deep sigh and patted Opus on the head. "Opus, I don't guess you have to go out any more, huh?"

I am not human. I am an animal. I'm not sure what kind of an animal that I am, but I am certain that the term applied to me is "animal." I have seen numerous creatures, hiding behind fancy disguises, prowling around this world. Many of these creatures have characteristics quite similar to mine, often quite frighteningly so. I can't remember from where or when I became or "arrived," but the fact that I exist, perhaps to mortals--"persist." It seems humans prefer us to be that type of domesticated mental organism called a "pet," rather than an intelligent companion or friend. After all, I do think I think rather well and, perhaps, a degree philosophical. Due to this slight human miscalculation, I am forced to deduce that I am, alas, an animal.

I do prefer to tramp around the countryside upon my four, appropriately delegated, legs, rather than journey, uncomfortably, on two legs. Upon two legs, in such a horizontal erection, I am the comic doomed for catastrophe. My head can extend to any noose that man might decide to suspend from trees or other peculiar limits; this, then, can cause a bit of a problem. When I am on all "fours", I can, at least, hop around and over nets and other gimmicks that these half-witted hunter

THE ADVENTURE OF DONCOR CLANK UPTHINGDOWN:
AN ADULT FAIRY TALE

(From: LIFE SONG ANTHOLOGY)

Clint Could

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lay about.

Animals have to play; I have my fun. I make fun of other animals. This is only natural, because humans ridicule me. It is fun too, as I know my own hypocrisy. I like to run. I love to run. Animals like to run and stalk, and run and attack, and run and laugh. I'm no different.

Man has long been inclined to feel the need to own a pet. They chased me for a long time and eventually one man, having the greatest of luck, perchanced to capture me. I shall not explain the details of my arresting experience, as the memory is distressing, not only humiliating; I lost. The man, who was to be my master, beamed; that was some consolation. I knew life couldn't be all gloom ahead.

I became his pet. He seemed proud of me, too; I was proud of my master. He would smile and we would play together---run and hide and run again. He would also feed me on time, or at least, when he didn't have one of his moods. My master had the moodiest existence, perhaps, that is why we got along so well; our moods matched our temper, and the temper our stomachs. When my master was perturbed about something, he would pout and then snarl. If he snarled my way, I would snarl back. I don't know whether he appreciated my retaliation. After a few snarls upon my part, I spent the evening under the pleasant stars, the only inconvenience being that it was in mid-December. I learned. I never found it necessary to snarl or snap at my master.

On some evenings, he would talk with me and ask me my opinion. My communication was lacking. I understood though and he seemed to see that I did. We were more than animal and man. We were pals.

I do bite. I have never bitten a human yet. There is one woman, who lives next door and sulks behind closed drapes. I heard her, one day, complaining to my master. She had the gall to imply that I had invaded her garbage can and strewn the contents across her yard. I had done nothing of the sort. The audacity to insinuate such a thing! I knew then that I would be sulking behind one of those cans the next time she made a visit. That was a fine dream: The Mad Sulker strikes again! But the woman moved before I had a chance. This was for best I imagine.

One evening, late in March, my master returned home with another animal. I was astonished. Not only hurt, I felt that I was not needed any more. I often wonder if animals can feel that need? Am I different? I went out for a walk that evening never to return there again. He could keep that mutt, that simple, plain, ordinary--that "dog!"

I wandered about town for a few days. I didn't feel hungry anymore and I didn't have that old urge. I just couldn't kill my own dinner. I have a heart. I tried to decide what prompted my master to bring home another pet. I thought we were pals. I spent another hunger-riddled-sleepless night and decided that I had to go home. I was, after all, dependent. It was a

devastating blow, the loss of virginity (that is to say--the fall into domesticity). I had to discover a plan. I knew my master was too proud to just take me back. I had to make him want me, perhaps, make him need me. I tried to think of what he thought of me. Did he want me back? Did he like me? Would he come after me? Perhaps, it would be better if I live alone; life of adventure. Again? Then I thought of a way. I remember the day I bathed in the city pool, which really wasn't a pool but a landmark fountain, and I knew how to get home, accompanied by a police officer. How delightful!

I trotted over to the fountain. I felt a new vitality grip me. It overwhelmed me and I was going home. I climbed into the water and headed directly for the center piece. The saturated glob of a statue rested in an upright position with cascading streams from the marble brow. The brow being the thick skull of the Honorable Miss Thelma Switheringspoon, Town Mayor of 1802 (to my utter disgust, she hated animals). I knew that I could kill two birds with one stone, to employ that old cliché. I sat (up to my hairless) in freezing water. I seemed to ignore the season, but I knew that my master would soon come for me. I howled and hooed, and splashed and scraped and no one paid me any attention. After hours, I began to feel somewhat dejected. It was getting cold. Finally I knew that I would have to do something fierce. I saw an old lady and I growled at her. She stopped. She looked. I made a grotesque face. She didn't seem disturbed. I quickly made "uglies" that

I had never even thought possible before. She was still placid. That was insulting. She laughed. That called for violence. I gulped up a mouth full of Switheringspoon liquid and spritzed it out (in a grander cascade than the lady herself) toward the old witch peering at me from beyond the fringe. She howled. (I discovered something that humans had in common with animals). I reached for another mouthful but she had alighted her broom and zoomed away. She hovered momentarily, I grimaced--she screamed, and I knew that I was saved. She returned within minutes accompanied by a police officer. How delightful! I wasn't going to give up without some struggle. I snarled and snapped. The officer reached into the water. I snapped again. He didn't flinch. I didn't want to hurt him; he was pressing his luck, though. I couldn't bite him. He rolled up his pants and waded into the pool. He jerked me up so swiftly that I didn't even manage a yelp. I was then passed into rough hands that bounced me into a netted truck. They whizzed off. I was shivering in the open van behind. They placed me among sick looking derelicts and other species of mammalia. I frowned. I realized my attempt was in vain. I would spend the rest of my life in a cage. I thought of the stories that other animals had told me. Stories that would make my hair bristle. I remember the story about the antelope family whose young daughter had been killed and eaten by savages. I was horrified. To think that she had been eaten--devoured by "savages!" After spending three very miserable nights in the morgue, I had an

unexpected visitor. Rumor had it that a strange fellow had been seized swimming about the city fountain and threatening old maids (that wasn't exactly the terminology). He was a photographer-reporter. Then I heard a familiar voice. Yes, it was my master. I saw him; he looked worse than me. Upon seeing me, he exclaimed: "Clank!"

Somehow I felt different again--somehow I felt isolated from these other animals. Had I developed a sense of belongingness? A sense of loyalty? Then on the other hand--survival. Perhaps, I was all wrong?

I just looked up at my master. He looked down at me, but it didn't feel as if he were looking down, but as if he were looking across--I knew then I was going home--We were pals! Why he came puzzled me; worried me, then. He smiled. I knew the answer then, and together we walked away.

FIRST PRIZE POETRY

Clint Gould

2. Little Box Blue

A One Act:

A Poem: A Study of
Life

(From: LIFE SOME ANTHOLOGY)

PLAY

Characters

Chorus

Girl Child

The Voice of Night

The Voice of Life

A Streetwalker

A Father

A Mother

A Young Lad

A Stranger

The Shadow of a Woman

FIRST PRIZE POETRY

Clint Gould

O, Little Boy Blue

A One Act:

A Poem: A Study of

Life

(From: LIFE SONG ANTHOLOGY)

Characters

Chorus

Girl Child

The Voice of Night

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A Streetwalker

A Father

A Mother

A Young Lad

A Stranger

The Shadow of a Woman

O. LITTLE BOY BLUE

SCENE I

A small bedroom of a middle-class apartment. The room is decorated for a female child of five years. A small night light burns at stage right, and the light of the moon fades through the only window that is partially curtained. The bedroom door is closed and a child lies upon the bed. A twig faintly taps against the window in a slight breeze.

Chorus: O, little Boy Blue (off-stage)
Come blow your horn!

Girl Child: The night,
it dark--and black and oh--
(whimpers) Mommy! the closet
door, it open! (Speaks louder)
Mommy!

Voice of Night: Shhhh! (off-stage)

Girl Child: (Rising in her bed to reach toward
the window) The man in the moon,
is he smiling?

Voice of Night: Shhh! (off-stage)

Girl Child:

Oh, I'm scared and
 baby's crying--Mommy! Mommy!
 (catching her breath) Not Daddy!
 A glass of water, I'm so dry.
 No, I go--but light so far.
 (moving slowly out of bed)
 Up, up, slowly--(whispering)
 Don't let Daddy hear me.
 (standing on the floor)
 Oooo! The floor, it cold!
 The closet door, I close it, not.
 What's the matter--
 No one hear babby crying?
 Mommy? (exits right)

Chorus:

SCENE II (Stage Left)

A small alley with two buildings with fire escapes bordering each side. A patched door swings, one step up, from the frame of the crumbled dwelling. The moonlight can be seen shining down. A neon (red) light flashes on and off to the left off stage. A green light behind drawn curtains, in the only window of the buildings on stage, occasionally flashes the shape of a woman on the curtains. A number of youths fighting can be heard off stage; the sound of the police cars. A street-walker leans against the building. A young lad stands beside her on the other side of the door. The Voice of life is heard off stage.

Voice of Life:

Upon my breast--

Youths with chained wrists

and silver knives--

clash in my alleys,

splintering crates,

Chorus:

splashing their innocent faces

with their buddies' blood.

A scream (a scream off stage),

Voice of Life:

The scream!

The flash of lights!

Streetwalkers:

The wail of sirens! (a pause)

The man in the moon, is he smiling?

Voice of Life:

Listen, O Night to the cry

Chorus:

O, little Boy Blue (off stage)

Come blow your horn.

Voice of Night:

Shhh! (off stage)

Voice of Life:

The wail of sirens--

Hear them?

The wail of a siren--

Hear her!

Voice of Night:

Oh, but hear me too! (a pause)

(the sounds of the police cars

fade away; the night is quiet.)

O, gravediggers and beggars,
Husbands and streetwalkers--
Ladies and gentlemen!
My prelude!

Chorus:

Love seeks a greater knowledge
While knowledge seeks a greater love.

Voice of Life:

(whispering) Hear her!

Streetwalker:

Come! Come!

Voice of Life:

Listen, O Night to the my
Chorus. Listen to all sounds.
This Eve, beside a splattered wall--
Spurting, "Come! Come!"

This, then, the sound of a harsh
mother yelling at her children:

Come! Come! (a pause)

Do you, O Night, love the morn?
Perhaps, you love the dusk? Speak!

Voice of Night:

Quote I not, but--
T'is not I, that speaks any love!
I seek it not!

Streetwalker:

Beats life! Leave us alone!
I build no shade, or human fire;
Nor need to it conspire!
You blurt! You speak! You life!
O, words, words, how trite! How ill!
Now, say I--
Best it be forgot!

Voice of Night:

Voice of Life:

Chorus:

I listen. I listen. He listens.
O, Little Boy Blue,
Come blow your horn.

Voice of Life:

Talk on, talk on--
You say nothing.
Talk on, it tends to ease the mind.
Pretend, pretend,
Yes, pile high the land of dreams
Around.

Streetwalker:

Come! Come!

Voice of Life:

O, woman, woman by your door--
Who are you watching, waiting for?
That boy by your side, your friend?
Or can you not see him?
Night demands this, not I!
Face him, O Eve, and see.

Streetwalker:

Begone Life! Leave me alone!

I can see. He is young. I can

Chorus:

love and I must live. Do you
hear that Life?

Voice of Night:

Yes! *(calls)* *(aside)*

It is not I!

Voice of Life:

You speak for me now, Night? I
have no one as my voice! O Eve,
Night is only a small part of
an incompleated dream. Once you for-
sake yourself to darkness,
unhappiness cannot be warmed by
sun, nor can wounds be mended in
this black. (A man walks up
to the door; he is dressed in a
suit. The lad leads the way to the
room within. He points with

The bedroom of his hand to the room to which the
open and the hall beyond green-lighted window can be seen.)
door. The twig still Now, my Eve, does he, do they, do
have passed. Dawn is you, see if the man in the moon is
replaced by the streaks smiling?

Streetwalker &
Voice of Night

Shhhh! (She enters the building)

honey! (she yells loudly)

*(A light appears off stage, a woman
enters the room)*

Chorus:

O, Little Boy Blue
Come blow your horn.

Voice of Life:

Who calls? (aside)
It is not I!

They disappear so quickly.
This easily their wounds heal!
These groans pretend to be the arms
of a gentle mother loving.

(Figures are seen moving about the
room behind the curtains. Stage lights
dim.)

Chorus:

O, Little Boy Blue

SCEND IIII blow your horn.

The bedroom of the girl child. Her bedroom door is
open and the hall beyond is black. The child stands in the open
door. The twig still scratching at the window. Three hours
have passed. Dawn is breaking. The light of the moon has been
replaced by the streaks of gray sunlight.

Girl Child:

I can't sleep anymore.

Mommy! (she yells loudly)

(A light appears off stage, a woman
enters the room) curtains. Stage lights

dim.)

Mother:

What's the matter? (Picking the girl up and carrying her to the bed.)
What does my little girl want?
It's very early and Mommy hasn't had much sleep.

Girl Child:

I can't sleep either Mommy? (Seeing that her Mother has been crying)
What has happened? Is something the matter? Didn't you hear baby crying?

Mother:

Yes, child, yes! (The mother can be heard crying louder.)

Girl Child:

Why didn't you. . . .

Mother's Voice:

Hello, darling? What happened?

Mother:

Shhhhhh! Go back to sleep.
(the mother walks to the window)

A man's Voice:

(Her father) Nothing.

Girl Child:

Why are you crying? (the Mother, not listening to her daughter, sees something. She turns and quickly darts out of the room, shutting the door behind her.) (a pause) Is the little girl asleep? And Junior?

Mother's Voice:

Father's Voice:

Girl Child:

Mommy! I'll be good.

Come back. (She starts to cry)

Hi, Panda! (She picks up her stuffed animal) Santa Claus will be

coming soon...What do you want? A train...for you and baby brother,

or a doll, for you and me? (Lying down)

Yes, I shall go to school next year, and you can come too....

(her voice fades away)

Father:

(A door slams and the mother can be heard crying louder.)

Mother's Voice:

Hello, darling? What happened?

What kept you so late? (off stage)

A man's Voice:

(Her father) Nothing.

Mother's Voice:

What? Why?

Father's Voice:

Nothing. It's nothing. It's over.

No more late nights. (a pause) Is the little girl asleep? And Junior?

Little Boy Blue....

Mother's Voice:

I don't know. What are you
going to do?

(Footsteps are heard in the
hall. The bedroom door opens.)

Girl Child:

Daddy? (a pause) Daddy!
What's the matter with Mommy?
What's in your hand? A present?
A doll?

Father:

Yes, a doll and a book. But
you had better go back to sleep
now. Little girls must grow
up to be women. They grow up in
their sleep. Like Mommy! You
can't tell. So, go to sleep.
I'll read you the story later.

Girl Child:

(As her father leaves) Wait!
(He shuts the door behind him.)

Mother's and Father's
Voice:

(off stage)
What did you give her...a book...what
about?....and doll...that's nice
Little Boy Blue....

FIRST PRIZE POETRY

SONNETS

The day dawned clear as a soprano's voice
 Sweetly singing an overture to day.
 The litmus paper sky thought over its choice,
 Turned pink, then blinked down in bright blue array.
 As I watched this sight from my window sill
 My bed had become a torturing rack
 I escaped to hear morn's crescendo fill
 The void that had been filled by black.
 I must run the race that POETRY ever won
 Until I am overtaken by night.
 So, early I start to begin my run
 And spring to flight with the first rays of light.
 I'm well begun, running in springing leaps
 While the fool between his black blanket sleeps.

The dome of the sky looms above in space,
 Spreading over all in perfect design.
 Flowing through the land where the hills recline,
 The stream slides silver over the earth's face.
 The ground gives birth to its green growing lace,
 Bundles of wonder all tied up with vine.
 Life laughs along in the melting sunshine.
 Satan's in his world, and God knows His place.
 The gray sky threatens to come tumbling down,
 The ground lies decaying, useless and stark.
 Life is devoured by the reasons of man.
 We stumble through space like a sad faced clown,
 While tempers tremble, waiting for a spark,
 And sirens pursue their lips to scream again.

FIRST PRIZE POETRY

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 Sweetly singing an overture to day.
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 Until I am overtaken by night.
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 And sirens purse their lips to scream again.

"if the object which inspires them today to write madrigals and sonnets had been born eighteen years earlier, it would scarcely have won a glance from them." --Schopenhauer

I will not write a song praising love;
Though blissful thoughts of this common illness
Follow me through the blazing day and shove
Themselves into my dreams to fill the stillness.
I will not laud the fragile day lily.
It's beauty will no blessing rhymes evoke.
To extol such a fleeting soul is silly
When one might rage about the ageless oak.
Love attacks the mellow part of my years
Like a worm that consumes the apple's core.
Love calls with excitement glossed with tears
But ends as a dry unpliant bore.
I will savor freedom's passing second,
Though even now I am being beckoned.

For I am dead and beginning to feel

The pleasant fragrance of finality.

I watch the men weep tears down inside cheek,

While the women worn their open sorrow.

With surface sadness I see my love cry.

Knowing that before the dawn of tomorrow

The torrent of her tears will ice-hard dry

In the torpid embrace of intercourse.

Her kind's Claudius will be the new friend

Who will stroke her locks with a rhythmic force.

And push a child into the same dull end

That I have found--and I am cracked in half.

Heads low, looking down toward Satan they are,

While I in inverse prayer look up and laugh

At their hollow words uttered from afar.

SECOND PRIZE POETRY

David Weir

THE RECURRENT FUNERAL

In silent life I lie and look at them:
 Pale shadows stumbling about in dark light
 Are they, howling out some horrible hymn,
 While stained radiance streams in, stinging bright--
 Filling and flooding, kissing all but me--
 For I am dead and beginning to reek
 The pleasant fragrance of finality.
 I watch the men weep tears down inside cheek,
 While the women morn their open sorrow.
 With surface sadness I see my Love cry,
 Knowing that before the dawn of tomorrow
 The torrent of her tears will ice-hard dry
 In the torpid embrace of intercourse.
 Mankind's Claudius will be the new friend
 Who will stroke her locks with a rhythmic force,
 And push a child into the same dull end
 That I have found--and I am cracked in half.
 Heads low, looking down toward Satan they are,
 While I in inverse prayer look up and laugh
 At their hollow words uttered from afar.

Though solemn ceremony still they run,
Meditating thoughts of pitiful praise.
Before they say "Amen" the prayer is done,
And next they eulogize my wrinkled days.

With false laurels of fine speech I am crowned,
The words fall hard upon my broken brow;
And happy am I when an end is found
To the worthless words, though again they bow

One last time, and then forget forever.
I want to cry out, but my dry throat warps
Silent screams into nothing; for never
A sound comes from a melancholy corpse.

Now the sextet calls and bears me away,
And I am dropped inside the dark wet walls.
The thudding dirt blots out the sky and day
As I am captured in the lab'rinth halls

That wind throughout the universal earth.
A foetus walled within the coffin's womb,
Once again I'm silent, awaiting birth
In embryonic darkness of the tomb...

And now it comes. Upon my rotting eye
Life-giving worms gnaw nourishment from me--
They grow, and grow, and even try to fly,
But bloom instead into a bright blond tree.

Now I and Nature in seance are one--

I entwine my bones, though the eons pass,

With fertile Willendorfs of soil and sun.

I erupt triumphant from the black grass,

Roll back the boulder of defeated death;

I take from myself, as also I give...

Victorious, I draw anew my breath;

And, in diurnal resurrection--Live!

Shadow cloaks a wary muse,

But soon infant emanation issues

And sudden could ripe

So frightening

Through stillness of a lethe-lake,

That all is jarred alive

And quick words capture thoughts before they dive

Into some other

Silent curse...

And as the world sleeps cold awakes

Is an eternal lull,

A wind sends the mind swirling from the skull

Into another

Universe--

There cascading color THE IDEA

Under the penumbral silence

Of some subconscious lair,

A green thought stalks within the moving air

And kisses the lips

Of lightning...

Beneath the breath of time, a dense

Shadow cloaks a warm muse,

But soon infant emanation ensues

And sudden sound rips

So frightening

Through stillness of a Lethe-lake,

That all is jarred alive

And quick words capture thoughts before they dive

Into some other

Silent curse...

And as the world sleeps cold awake

In an eternal lull,

A wind sends the mind swirling from the skull

Into another

Universe--

There cascading colors abide

That dapple floating dreams...

And the sun stands on a tripod of beams,

Monarch of the dew-

Sprinkled light,

As luminous moths softly glide,

Fluttering elation...

They spiral out of the cave of creation,

Then slink back into

Frozen night.

THIRD PRIZE POETRY

Robert McDaniel

Undedicated Sonnet

I've often wondered, Shakespeare, if such verse
As yours comes by rehearse or impromptu;
For if I knew, a sonnet, terse--no worse,
At will I'd write and dedicate to you.
But as you're shrouded in forbidding gloom,
I dare not even steal a glance that way;
For if those words inscribed are yours that tomb
Might well be mine--a price I will not pay.
So I will wait and struggle, if in vain,
To find somehow what made you, Will, so great:
For less I settle than forbidden train,
But understand the wquanderings of fate;
And if I honor all the while your name,
Will I not earn your magic voice and fame?

A Vigil

Run, my lady, you are late;
Bare feet in the wild strawberries,
Love is sweet or not at all;
Run, my lady, I will wait.

Tripping down the slope, my lady,
Where the forest merges swamp;
Careful, lover, of the dusk now--
For that path at noon is shady.

Walk, my lady, carefully,
Padding on the mossy footlog;
Wake the screech owl in the cypress
With your shrill, astonished plea!

Slip, my lady? stumble, fall?
Disappear in brackish water?
(And I, looking toward its dark wake,
Fail to see the water snake.)

AN OLD MAN FISHING

"The fish are gone," the old man thought:

"Small miracle, but once I caught

A hundred in a single day."

But the fish were gone, gone away.

"How could it be?" the old man said:

"Just yesterday, why me and Jed . . .

Or was it the day before? I know

It couldn't have been long ago."

And as he fished and watched, he wished

That he could be the boy who swished

His bare feet in the water there,

Beside the crudely-built raft where

A fine, long string of fish hung, too.

Then, where they went, he thought he knew.

THE BEAST

Along the dark path Lobo walked,
The hour still and late.
A wanton killer Lobo stalked,
The killer of his mate.
The nightwind seemed much colder now,
The nightsong, monotone.
The trail seemed much longer somehow,
As Lobo walked alone.
Then by the path a light appeared,
A campfire, man beside.
His sullen, lazy head he reared,
A A fearful scream he cried;
But would not rise to meet the day,
For Lobo made him pay.

Murmurings

I see you in the moonlight
Upon the night-blackened water.
You're shimmering, all seems right;
I join the loon in laughter.

The canebrake clings and holds me;
It murmurs that you're fickle.
I'll change all for a slight fee:
A splash, a water wrinkle.

I join you in the moonlight;
With you, I disappear;
I try to take you from night--
But soon you sparkle clear

Upon the water, fickle love,
Upon the water just above.

To A Lone Doe

The doe came like a vision

In hazy, faraway glass,

To nibble at the soft grass

And hasten my decision.

In shyness from the meadow,

She seemed to whisper to me;

Once come, she fled as quickly,

The dainty, living shadow,

Who hastened my decision.

For Time's own farewell kiss is all but fair --

To those who need, -- whose others' wounds do tend,

Who wait to greet the dark without a friend!

HONORABLE MENTION POETRY

Clint Gould

A SONNET

O Life, why since one man needs another,
 In vain fall words he attempts to mutter.
 So thus in each anguished word he tries
 To proclaim that which custom proud denies.
 O, arm and hand do fear! Hides he his heart, --
 And dares not sacrifice that desired part
 In masses' bosom held! Then care flees blind --
 To quickly light on pagan idol, mind.
 O, what is it he seeks to gain or keep?
 In Topaz' rays, not marble he can reap,
 Or scent the gentle wisps of Autumn's air.
 For Time's own farewell kiss is all but fair --
 To those who need, -- whose others' wounds do tend,
 Who wait to greet the dark without a friend!

LA CHANGE SANS CHANGE

All words are retold, rewritten, reread.

Change alone is left with youth.

Friends grow old with trees and dreams.

The poets' verse prolongs the call;

His rhyme unrhymed -- the song unsung.

The artist's sketch awaits the claim;

The frame unfilled -- the sea of life before the shore.

Fancy beneath the sky burns;

The golden laurel pines; --

Seasons tear between the boughs.

The sun retreats behind a cloud

And hides its face from the stream, --

The mirror of an omni-seen visage.

Then sulks the rain.

Still upon a smoothen lake

Scarcely caught the fleeing image seen --

The moon at noon

Easing her arms to slip by eras passed.

There glows the glory of Michaelangelo;

There shine the pillars of Delphi's stone;

There dies Duncan on his nest!

All these, and the serenity that is St. Paul's dome,
Seem to fade into an aurora of allusion, --
Dulled by disillusion.

Here experience's chores are complete

And the falling Star meets no sun

Rising by the curve.

Here, granite, wood, marble, stone, all see

The sculptor,

And the tools held in

The immortal hand.

Into the valley,
Wandering, walking, waiting the somber hours --
I shall seek out my last refuge, my last childhood,
Then to drink from the quietude of Lethe,
While time of life drifts here then there in forgetfulness.

Into the valley,
Where Chiron grew the wiser
And Amalthea blessed her milk --
Where the air is fresh and filled with the voice of the one
who waits;
Where she waits.

Into the valley,
Alas, I go, not like they who pass her byward,
They who come in sleep, remain in sleep.
Her tenderness, her love, the bosom of the earth
Cradles that moment --
That moment that finds us in eternity.

DANS LA VALLEE

Into the valley,
Far below the amorphous clouds,
Beneath the arms of verdure,
Upon the blades of grass
Where youths have lain and searched beneath the stars
Longing for the chorus of dreams.

Into the valley,
With the dawn of darkness
Ascending the slopes, then shall I go --
While the light of every tiny star,
Each upon his own golden throne,
Silently slips into obscurity.

Into the valley,
With fallen dreams and yet fonder memories by my side,
I shall pass there, not a solitary trek,
But together with the recollection of honored faces in my mind --
And the last human touch upon my hand,
I shall fix my gaze and steady my pace.

Into the valley,
Wandering, walking, waiting the somber hours --
I shall seek out my last refuge, my last childhood.
Then to drink from the quietude of Lethe,
While time of life drifts here then there in forgetfulness.

Into the valley,
Where Chiron grew the wiser
And Amalthea blessed her milk --
Where the air is fresh and filled with the voice of the one
 who waits;
Where she waits.

Into the valley,
Alas, I go, not like they who pass her unaware.
They who come in sleep, remain in sleep.
Her tenderness, her love, the bosom of the earth
Cradles that moment --
That moment that finds me in eternity.

j'ai vu un oiseau blanc

I saw a white bird
float through the clouds --
over a sandy beach
bleached by summer's temper.

I saw a white bird
then, fell I in love --
with such beauty
with such obsession's treasure.

I saw a white bird
drift by a cloud --
and abandoned pools
that reflect the gold autumn's sky.

I saw a white bird
in the sky --
dip and soar
into the clouds
that hide the sun on chilled autumn days.

Destitution.

Why do you appear as though you
think I welcome your repulsive sight?

Why do you offer your bargain
So cheaply to me?

As I is my misery unique,
Or is my submissiveness uncommonly apparent?

Curse!

On both you fleadish followers
Of my life.

But I pray you, don't leave.

I did not mean to offend you.

Too many times I say things to
Hurt those closest to me.

Stay!

I beseech you, don't leave!

Why?

Because without you I would be alone.

HONORABLE MENTION POETRY

Hilda Trapp Keeton

A CRY IN THE NIGHT

Loneliness,
 Destitution,
 Why must you always find comfort
 Bedded so near me?
 Why has my company found special
 Favor with you?
 Ah, even you turn your backs and
 Refuse to face me.

Loneliness.
 Why do you appear so strong?
 Why can't you look more peaked
 As though someday your tainted
 Wordless face might fade away?
 Why is the opportunity always
 Mine to befriend you?

Destitution.
 Why do you appear as though you
 Think I welcome your repulsive sight?
 Why do you offer your bargain
 So cheaply to me?
 Am I in my misery unique,
 Or is my submissiveness uncommonly apparent?

Curses!
 On both you fiendish followers
 Of my life.
 But I pray you, don't leave.
 I did not mean to offend you.
 Too many times I say things to
 Hurt those closest to me.

Stay!
 I beseech you, don't leave!
 Why?
 Because without you I would be alone.

LOVE ON THE SEA ON NIGHT

Stephanie Clemmons Brown

A lady, or was she a tramp? went walking by the sea.
The sea, all intent upon its own motion, lapped her feet.
Foolish woman to take pleasure in such a trifling act.
The sea did not know that she was there, nor would it care.

Little knew the fog horn far
That announced the falling mist,
That this chance we'd not resist.

Little knew the chiming "Ben",
Passing time could not have withered--
His solemn toll, unheard, had scattered.

No one knew and no one cared
But two hidden deep in night,
Darkness turning wrong to right.

Remember once a London day.
Had it lasted past the morn,
Love, my dear, might not be torn.

LOVE ON A LONDON NIGHT

Laura Dishong

Remember when our love began?
Fog of London his us there
Lost in wonder, hope, and care.

Little knew the fallen clouds
That within their coverlet
Two lovers fast in arms were knit.

Little knew the fog horn far
That announced the falling mist,
That this chance we'd not resist.

Little knew the chiming "Ben",
Passing time could not have mattered--
His solemn toll, unheard, had scattered.

No one knew and no one cared
But two hidden deep in night,
Darkness turning wrong to right.

Remember once a London day.
Had it lasted past the morn,
Love, my dear, might not be torn.

Recalled vivid dreams of flight,
dark land of Ares, blind of night.

He looked homeward in fear of curses,
never suspecting fate's recourse.

Yet, hometown hordes, bodies and bands,
welcomed a hero; hallowed man!

Banquets, feasts, printed acclaim,
local boy, sacrosanct fame.

A few ribbons and medals of bronze and gold,
stars, leaves and wings; so hold.

Repeated tales of strife, fire and din
adored gazes from friends and kin.

Though strength and numbers favored them,
definitely no match for their hero then.

THE HERO

Charles H. Howell

From the field of crimson earth,
came the hero of mortal birth.

No Zeus of Hercules, this man of arms,
but a pathetic mass, fleeing from inner harm.

Tests of nerve, guts and spine,
failures; tragically vilified.

Hell hath no equal to terrors endured,
shattered mind, no remedy, no cure.

For he ran and hid from ghostly stares,
torment and suffering uncompar'd.

Never to return to that wretched dirt,
where death arrived in firey spasms and spirts.

To survive, his only goal became,
much better to exist than die in flame.

Transversed seas, Eastern delays,
provided time for cowardice assayed.

Recalled vivid dreams of flight,
dark land of Ares, blind of night.

He looked homeward in fear of curse,
never suspecting fate's recourse.

Yet, hometown hordes, bodies and bands,
welcomed a hero; hallowed man!

Banquets, feasts, printed acclaim,
local boy, sacrosanct fame.

A few ribbons and medals of bronze and gold,
stars, leaves and wings; so bold.

Repeated tales of strife, fire and din
adored gazes from friends and kin.

Though strength and numbers favored them,
definitely no match for their hero then.

But dreams of glory must fade away,
onslaught of shame, worry and dismay.

Comrades faces and bloody grins,
uncovers secrets hidden within.

Frail, ignoble creature such error chose,
infinite damage, heart and soul.

Surely time will truth repay,
annals of destiny, facts displayed.

Oh! He cannot suffer the expose,
once again hero, run, and hide your face.

ON SEEING AN EXHIBITIONIST
Janet Vick

Strolling, head bowed, I glanced up
and saw grimy him,
exposing himself to white me.

Was I afraid or repulsed? Hardly - amused
Yet every dictate of conscious custom
imbued urged me to flee in hysteria

Convention ruled, and properly shocked,
I entreated chivalry to aid my vulnerable virtue
Lately, I hate my act of cowardice
he did me no harm - that black snake

WITH THE MORNING

Janet Vick

With the morning, I'll not feel necessity of expression
The eager, shiny glances into the mirror of honesty
Will vanish with new dawn

But sleep eludes me tonight and hopeless of your response
The world seems to be a tragic charade
All truth and rare specialness are dying

With morning, I can't say to you
That my silent body and my sweltering soul
Wanted you by night's urgentness

But, at this moment, I have your smile
Within my mind's eye, and you fill every consequence
Tomorrow, with the morning, the indelible image will fade

But if the dream were real
My love would not be obscured in verse
But sung in delicate daffodil meadows
The universal heartbeat of happiness would drum consummation

With the morning, if you wanted me, my love,
Music could be made in silence
Flowers would blossom in the bleak deadness
And I should certainly awaken from my nightmare
Secure in your oblivious arms
With the morning

"MY ANSWER"
Janet Vick

Whirling, swimming, woozing my head
Forgetting, soothing, swallowing my soul
Spirits from the Great Twitch to keep
myself from being broken
Ah, would that I could stay always
upon the strand of Kubla Khan.

Gratitude I bear to this dissolver of
my desire circulating
my needs penetrating,
My reclamation perpetuating
because 'tis far better to be an alcoholic than a neurotic.